

MR. ADAMS'S LETTERS.

LETTER X.

AMSTERDAM, OCT. 16, 1780.

SIR,

THE tenth head of inquiry is, "How great is the force of America? The number of men? Their discipline, &c. from the commencement of the troubles? Is there a good supply of warlike stores? Are these to be found partly or entirely in America? Or must they be imported?"

THE force of America consists of a regular army, and of a militia: The regular army has been various at different times. The first regular army, which was formed in April, 1775, was enlisted for six months only; the next was enlisted for one year; the next for three years; the last period expired last February. At each of these periods, between the expiration of a term of enlistment, and the formation of a new army, the English have given themselves airs of triumph, and have done some brilliant exploits. In the winter of 1775-6, indeed, they were in Boston; and although our army, after the expiration of the first period of enlistment for six months, was reduced to a small number, yet the English were not in a condition to attempt any thing. In the winter of 1776-7, after the expiration of the second term of enlistment, and before the new army was brought together, the English marched thro' the Jerseys. After the expiration of the last term of enlistment, which was for three years, and ended last January or February, the English went to their old exultations again, and undertook the expedition to Charlestown. In the course of the last spring and summer, however, it seems the army has been renewed; and they are now enlisted in general, during the war.

To state the numbers of the regular army according to the establishment, that is, according to the number of regiments at their full complement, I suppose the continental army has sometimes amounted to fourscore thousand men. But the American regiments have not often been full, any more than the English. There are in the war office at Philadelphia, regular monthly returns of the army, from 1775 to this day, but I am not able from memory, to give any accurate account of them; it is sufficient to say, that the American regular army has been generally superior to that of the English; and it would not be good policy to keep a larger army, unless we had a prospect of putting an end to the British power in America by it. But this, without a naval superiority, is very difficult, if not impracticable: The English take possession of a sea-port town, fortify it in the strongest manner, and cover it with the guns of their men of war, so that our army can not come at it. If France or Spain should co-operate with us so far as to send ships enough to maintain the superiority at sea, it would not require many years, perhaps not many months, to exterminate the English from the United States. But this policy those courts have not adopted, which is a little surprizing, because it is obvious, that by captivating the British fleet and army in America, the most decisive blow would be given to their power, which can possibly be given in any quarter of the globe.

What number of troops General Washington has at this time under his immediate command, I am not able precisely to say: I presume, however, that he has not less than twenty thousand men, besides the French troops under the Comte de Rochambeau. Nor am I able to say, how many General Gates has to the southward.

But besides the regular army, we are to consider the militia. Several of the colonies were formed into a militia, from the beginning of their settlement. After the commencement of this war, all the others followed their example, and made laws, by which all the inhabitants of America are now enrolled in a militia, which may be computed at five hundred thousand men. But these are scattered over a territory of one hundred and fifty miles in breadth, and at least fifteen hundred miles in length, lying all along upon the sea-coast. This gives the English the advantage, by means of their superiority at sea, to remove suddenly and easily from one part of the continent to another, as from Boston to New-York, from New-York to Rhode-Island, from New-York to Chesapeake or Delaware Bay, or to Savannah or Charlestown, and the Americans the disadvantage, of not being able to march either the regular army or the militia, to such vast distances, without immense expence of money and time. This puts it in the power of the English to take so many of our sea-port towns; but not to make any long and successful marches into the interior country, or make any permanent establishment there.

As to discipline, in the beginning of the war there was very little, either among the militia or the regular troops. The American officers have, however, been industrious; they have had the advantage of reading all the books which have any reputation, concerning military science; they have had the example of their enemies, the British officers, before their eyes a long time, indeed from the year 1768; and they have had the honor of being joined by British, German, French, Prus-

sian, and Polish officers, of infantry and cavalry, of artillery, and engineering; so that the art of war is now as well understood in the American army, and military discipline is now carried to as great perfection, as in any country whatever.

As to a supply of warlike stores: At the commencement of hostilities, the Americans had neither cannon, arms, or ammunition, but in such contemptible quantities as distressed them beyond description; and they have all along been straightened, at times, by a scarcity of those articles, and are to this day.

They have, however, at present, an ample field artillery; they have arms and powder; and they can never be again absolutely destitute, because the manufactures of all sorts of arms, of cannon of all sorts, of salt petre and powder, have been introduced and established. These manufactures, although very good, are very dear, and it is very difficult to make enough for so constant and so great a consumption. Quantities of these articles are imported every year; and it is certain they can be imported and paid for, by American produce, cheaper than they can be made.

But the Americans, to make their system perfect, want five hundred thousand stands of arms, that is, one at least for every militia man, with powder, ball, and accoutrements in proportion. This, however, is rather to be wished for than expected. The French Fleet carried arms to America: and if the communication between America and France and Spain should become more frequent, by frigates and men of war, and especially if this Republic should be compelled into a war with England, America will probably never again suffer much from the want of arms or ammunition.

The English began the war against the Northern Colonies: Here they found the effects of ancient militia laws; they found a numerous and hardy militia, who fought and defeated them upon many occasions. They then thought it necessary to abandon these and fall upon the middle Colonies, whose militia had not been so long formed: However, after several years experience, they found they were not able to do any thing to the purpose against them. They have lately conceived the design of attacking the Southern Colonies: Here the white people, and consequently the militia, are not so numerous, and have not yet been used to war: here therefore, they have had some apparent successes; but they will find in the end their own destruction in these very successes. The climate will devour their men; their first successes will embolden them to rash enterprises; the people there will become inured to war, and will finally totally destroy them: For as to the silly gasconade of bringing the Southern Colonies to submission there is not even a possibility of it. The people of those States are as firm in principle, and as determined in their tempers, against the designs of the English, as the Middle or Northern States. I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN ADAMS.

MR. CALKOE.

AN EC D O T E.

CROMWELL sent his Excellency LOCKHART to France, with the title of Ambassador, where he was received with all the honors due to his rank. One day the old Marshal Villeroy, Governor to Louis XIV. asking this Englishman why Cromwell, instead of taking the title of Protector, had not got himself declared King. "Mon-sieur," replied Lockhart, "we know the extent of the prerogatives of a King, and limit them accordingly; but we are ignorant of those of a Protector."—Lockhart was right; new titles are necessary to new power.

NEW-YORK, NOVEMBER 14, 1789.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, SEPT. 19, 1789. A STATEMENT of the ANTICIPATION of MONIES on the Public Credit, by the late Commissioners of the Board of Treasury, on the 11th of September, 1789.

THE Register having accurately stated the account of warrants, drawn by the late Commissioners of the Board of Treasury on the Treasurer of the United States, and having examined the amount of monies actually received by the said Treasurer, certifies, that the excess of warrants drawn beyond the said Treasurer's actual receipts, amounts to the sum of one hundred eighty-nine thousand, nine hundred and six dollars, thirty-four ninetihs.

Of this sum thus anticipated on the public credit, 34,657 67 Warrants have been issued to the Officers of the civil list on account of their salaries for the year 1789: and 26,575 34 Ditto in payment for cloathing and rations, and is a part of the sum estimated by the Secretary of the War Department, for pay, cloathing, rations, and other expences of the army establishment, for the year 1789: 129,673 27 Ditto, to Contractors for Provisions, Indian Treaties, and for other services of the United States.

189,906 38 With respect to this last sum of 129,673 27 the Register observes; That there remained in the hands of the Receivers of Taxes at the date of their last respective settlements at the treasury, certain balances which the Commissioners of the late Board of Treasury have since drawn for, in favor of the Treasurer, and would appear as having been paid by them, had their Accounts been rendered to the 11th September, 1789.

It is presumed therefore, that the Anticipation will be lessened, the amount of those balances being 30,260 10

Dollars, 99,443 17

There will then remain to be provided for (besides the anticipations for the Civil List and War Department, afore-mentioned) the sum of ninety-nine thousand, four hundred, and thirteen dollars, twenty-six hundredths. It is presumed no possible injury can arise to the public by making this provision; because the Treasurers accounts, and the accounts of the Receivers of Taxes will undergo examination by the present officers of the Treasury, when any surplussage beyond such particular grant which Congress may be pleased to make, will be duly shewn.

JOSEPH NOURSE, Register.

ESTIMATE of the AMOUNT of PENSIONS for the INVALIDS.

Table with columns: TAKEN from Returns, dated, Dollars, cents. Rows include New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Conjectural entries for Rhode-Island, Delaware, Maryland, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Georgia, and York, N. Jersey and Connec.

War-Office of the United States, Sept. 17th, 1789. (Signed) H. KNOX.

To the Honorable the SECRETARY of the TREASURY of the UNITED STATES. Copy of the original on file, ALEXANDER HAMILTON, Secretary of the Treasury.

THE SECRETARY of the TREASURY, in obedience to the order of the House, of the 23d of September, 1789, respectfully submits the settlement therein required, together with one of the whole Anticipation on the Taxes made by the late Superintendent of Finance, at the time of resigning his office; on which, a balance appears due of 93,463 29-cents, dollars.

This debt has constantly been considered on the part of the United States, as an actual specie claim; and nothing but the low state of the Treasury, has hitherto prevented the Claimants under it from receiving the same payment, as appears to have been made to other creditors of the same class. It may be further proper to observe, that the chief part of the balance above stated, was intended to have been paid from the specie quota, due from the State of New-York, but that the said State have discharged the whole sum in specie, due on former requisitions; and the monies arising therefrom, having been applied to the more pressing general exigencies of the union, the claimants have now no other prospect of relief, but what may be derived from the National Treasury.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, Secretary of the Treasury.

September 25th, 1789. STATE of the ANTICIPATION of the TAXES by the SUPERINTENDANT of FINANCE. ON William Whipple, receiver for the State of New-Hampshire— For an order in favor of Major-General Sullivan, dated the 24th January, 1784, 1,300 Ditto Brigadier-General Moses Hazen, dated the 24th January, 1784, 2,887 73 Ditto Capt. Olive, dated 6th March, 1784, 406 26 Ditto Capt. Philip Leibert, ditto, 105 17 Ditto Lieut. Germane Dienne, ditto, 85 Ditto Capt. Anthony Selin, 8th ditto, 219 5

On James Lovell, Receiver for the State of Massachusetts— For an Order in favor of John Langdon, Continental Agent at Portsmouth, dated the 4th of August, 1784, 6,000 Ditto Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, dated the 30th September, 1784, 6,000

On George Olney, Receiver for the State of Rhode-Island— For an Order in favor of Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, dated the 30th of September, 1784, 3,000

On Hezekiah Merrill, Receiver for the State of Connecticut— For an Order in favor of Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, dated the 30th of September, 1784, 3,000

On Thomas Tillson, Receiver for New-York— For an Order in favor of Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, dated the 30th of September, 1784, 60,000 Ditto of Abraham Skinner, late Commissary-General of Prisoners, dated the 30th of September, 1784, 38,892 15

On William C. Houston, Receiver for the State of New-Jersey— For an Order in favor of Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, dated the 30th of September, 1784, 6,000

On William Geddes, Receiver for the State of Delaware— For an Order in favor of Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, dated the 30th of September, 1784, 6,000

On Benjamin Harwood, Receiver for the State of Maryland— For an Order in favor of Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, dated the 30th of September, 1784, 9,000

On George Webb, Receiver for the State of Virginia— For an Order in favor of Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, dated the 30th of September, 1784, 25,000

Total, 158,106 15 Deduct so much thereof paid, 60,432 76

Leaves unpaid, 93,463 29

TREASURY of the UNITED STATES. Register's Office 24th September, 1789. JOSEPH NOURSE, Register.

AN EC D O T E.

THE ABBE DE BOISROBERT being one morning with the Cardinal RICHLIEU, said several disagreeable things of a certain magistrate of the first order, and attributed to him much ridicule: a little valet de chambre took it in his head to say to him, "Monseigneur l'Abbe, take care what you say; I give you notice that I will inform M**** of it, to whom I am greatly attached, because he is my relation."—"Friend," replied the Abbe, "tell M**** whatever you please; on my part I will inform him that you pretend to be his relation."

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